



Providing children with a safe place to learn and grow

The safety and well-being of children and families is critical to a healthy and prosperous Minnesota, both now and in the future. Yet right now more than 78,000 children in Minnesota live in deep poverty and thousands more lack many of the basic conditions needed for healthy development. Too often, this leads to poor academic performance, severe mental and physical health problems, involvement in the criminal justice system and premature death. We know that without support many of these children will never get the chance to lead healthy and successful lives, and may continue the cycle of intergenerational poverty that keeps families and communities in perpetual crisis. Minnesota simply cannot afford to leave these children behind.

Over the past two years Minnesota has made important investments in services to help working families access effective and affordable child care, support families' efforts to safely care for their children, help parents complete their education and reduce infant deaths in family child care settings. We have seen positive results from these investments, but there is still more to do.

Access to safe, effective and affordable child care is still a significant barrier for too many families, we need to do better protecting children from abuse and neglect, children need more access to dental care for children and there is more we can accomplish supporting American Indian families. These areas are all addressed in the governor's fiscal year 2016-17 budget proposal.

Legislative proposals:

To provide children with a safe place to learn and grow, Gov. Mark Dayton moved forward these budget proposals for the fiscal year 2016-2017 biennium:

- Reduce the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care waiting list.
- Sustain Parent Aware, the state's quality rating system.
- Simplify Child Care Assistance Program requirements.
- Eliminate the application fee for child support services.
- Increase child protection oversight.
- Provide access through the Oral Health Initiative.
- Provide culturally specific intervention to American Indian families.
- Improve access to health care, financial and food support programs for the Red Lake Nation.
- Provide integrated care for high-risk pregnant women.

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